

ADDRESS TO PARENTS

ON THE

EDUCATION OF GIRLS:

BY

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OF


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HE ideas embodied in the following Address were suggested to Mrs. Holliwell during her experience in teaching; and read at a recent re-opening of her School. The intention at the time was simply to secure the co-operation of Parents in carrying out her views; and publicity, beyond the School-room, was not anticipated. At the solicitation of Friends, however, and in compliance with the urgent wishes of those whose mature experience and advanced views, as Educationists, entitle them to be considered reliable authorities in such matters, it is, with much diffidence, now submitted to the public in its present form, with an earnest desire that the benefit to the cause—which has been kindly anticipated to result from its more general circulation—may, in some humble measure—be realized.

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ON

THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

The subject I have chosen upon which to offer a few remarks is one the importance of which all will admit; but before entering on it, I wish to express the feeling of humility with which I undertake the task. Yet, however incompetent one may feel to discuss so important a subject, I regard it as a duty to employ such means as may be within my reach to awaken interest in the minds of parents. I endeavor merely to indicate the road, hoping that others will pursue it further. Nothing can exceed the solicitude of most parents for the health and enjoyment of their children; I wish to suggest that moral and intellectual progress must be sought after with equal avidity, or the happiness of the child will be shipwrecked. There is scarcely a habit, a mode of thought, or a peculiar taste that we possess, that cannot be traced to early influence, and early example. A look, a careless word, an inadvertent action, may be the lever of future deeds in some observing child. Deeply penetrated, then, with a sense of the importance of this matter, and anxious to arouse a corresponding interest in the minds of parents, I submit my views for their consideration, hoping only that my remarks may lead to a few fireside discussions, a few earnest thoughts. Books, enough and to spare, have been written on education, but until we become desirous of acquiring knowledge on any particular subject, we do not seek the means. To kindle this desire in some hitherto indifferent, to solicit the sympathy and co-operation of others already convinced of its importance, is my only ambition, and I claim indulgence for an honest though imperfect effort made in behalf of what I believe is felt to be a universal want.

The "Education of Girls" is a subject that in its various aspects resembles the mustard seed in the parable, a very small thing in tender youth, but far reaching, almost unlimited, in its mature influence. It would be difficult to point out the person, whether king or peasant, professional or mereantile, educated or ignorant, who is entirely free from female influence, through mother, wife, sister, or friend. We need not go to history to learn of kingdoms governed by women; society, we know by experience and observation, bends unresistingly to their sway, and we daily see numerous examples of feminine character and feminine will playing a conspicuous part in the domestic circle. When this

subtle power is wielded by the virtuous and intelligent, it is a social reformer, it elevates and refines all within its reach ; but unfortunately there are many sad proofs of this same fascination leading to ruin when exercised by the unprincipled and ignorant. We see parents who would be pious, led into amusements they look upon with distrust to please their daughters ; we see men who would be honest and pay their debts, living far beyond their means to gratify their vain and pleasure-seeking families ; we see girls who might be pure and intellectual in their aspirations, following in the wake of a worldly minded mother, and frittering away time, the precious loan from God, in the most frivolous occupations. The beginning of evil in all these cases is in *education*. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Education to be efficient must have this *training* in view, not merely a polishing of the surface or a drawing forth of certain talents, but grasping the moral with the intellectual, thus producing a harmonious whole. Based on false principles it is worse than none, since the neglect of efforts to educate indicates a want of means, and that condition in itself supplies a training that is effectual in bringing out some practical qualities, and in a few exceptional cases has not proved inimical to fine attainments and noble characteristics. Education in its true sense, I take to be, that amount and direction of culture addressed to the intellect and heart which shall develop into fair proportions the finest talents and most generous impulses of the individual, which shall weed out evil inclinations and prune away rank luxuriance, which shall curb the extravagance of imagination and nurse into blossom the buds of native genius, and over all and through all impart, by God's assistance and blessing, that Christian spirit of love which is of greater price than any mere mental attainment. If such be a correct view of education, whence the contemptuous smile, almost a sneer, with which the mention of the subject is received with most people, as connected with a boarding school young lady ? There must be something wrong ; either its importance is not recognised, or there is an error in its practical application, for though a few ill-disposed persons may jest at what is good and worthy of reverence, we find that public opinion is mostly right ; whatever is generally condemned needs careful examination at least, before it is accepted, and surely education as described above cannot be supposed to have much part in girls' schools usually, or why the almost universal distrust in its efficiency and results ?

Having briefly noticed the significant bearing of female education on society and the world at large, I shall now proceed to examine more fully what is meant by the expression, as used by different classes of persons ; then what it should mean ; and lastly consider the best manner of applying our present improvements in the art of teaching to practical and beneficial use.

There are three distinct aims in educating a girl, varying according to the ability and aspirations of her parents—to render her useful, ornamental, or intellectual. To cultivate exclusively the useful or the intellectual is frequently the destiny of those who have to make their own way in the world ; in such cases there is no attempt at perfection, no desire to combine those accomplish-

ments and acquirements which are indispensable in forming the "Lady." Necessity is a hard master, often as cruel as the slave driver, and seldom vouchsafes leisure or opportunity for improvement in other walks than those prescribed by duty. I shall not dwell on these circumstances, they are foreign to my object just now, which is to treat of education as it presents itself to people in general, who entertain no particular views respecting their children beyond bringing them up in a style befitting their station in life. The ornamental is too often exclusively cultivated by those claiming the highest position in society, although types of the useful and intellectual woman are to be found among the most aristocratic circles.

Let us contemplate each of these characters, they are familiar to all, and each of them might be pronounced well educated by those who can grasp but one side of a subject or one view of a question.

Training up a girl to usefulness only has its failures as decided and fatal as the opposite course of educating only for show. Such a system recognizes no world, intellectually speaking, beyond the material one. Any instruction embracing the ornamental or intellectual, without direct reference to its utility, is regarded with jealousy, and thus the mind of the pupil is restricted to the humblest mental sphere. She must be a good arithmetician and disciplinarian, that will assist her in the practical duties of life, and will help her to economise money and time; she can thus keep accounts, shop advantageously, and will prove altogether a valuable machine in any household for saving or discreetly spending. The *menage* of a woman so reared is always a success, she can keep up appearances at less cost than other people, her servants and family are well regulated and orderly, and she has enough and to spare for charitable purposes, while her accomplished sister with the same means will be at her wits end to know how to supply the ordinary requirements of her household. We call such a person a good manager, and admire her domestic arrangements, but we do not often care to approach nearer. She is frequently arbitrary and narrow-minded, incapable of feeling an interest beyond her circumscribed world. She values her dumb possessions more than the enjoyment of her family, and abounds in luxuries too good for daily use, plate locked up and furniture and pictures too costly to gaze upon. This disposition has the art of distilling annoyance from every trifling domestic occurrence, and of spreading a cold unsympathetic atmosphere around, and although the inmates of the house are probably surrounded with more bodily comforts than others of their acquaintance, their enjoyment is marred from being reminded constantly of their cost and importance. The school-boy, ambitious of standing high in his class and of honorable distinction in his future career, values not his mother's admirable management for his health and comfort unless he can creep to her side in the twilight and whisper in her ear his youthful hopes and dreams, happy in her sympathy and faith. To be a model housekeeper is all very well, but is it the end and aim of an immortal spirit? Have we not minds to improve and purer tastes to cultivate? We meet with most amiable characters occasionally in this class, but even then intimate companionship can never be desired with

minds limited to the daily cares and work and worries of life. We commend them, because they contrast favorably with the popular type of careless and extravagant women, and feel that their error is the safer, though an error still. However, in spite of all that can be said in disparagement of the exclusively useful as an end and object in education, we must hope that the style will not become quite extinct until a revolution takes place among its rivals, else I fear we shall be bankrupt in common sense, comfort and decency; for we can scarcely expect the fashionable *belle* and the blue-stocking to devote their superior minds to vulgar wants; and with many shortcomings, as congenial companions and friends, we must acknowledge that the thoroughly domestic woman is, after all, a blessing in her immediate sphere.

Many prize unduly manners and accomplishments—to bow gracefully, to enter a room with dignity, to dance well, to play and sing sufficiently to please the ordinary taste, to sketch or paint a little, to be skilful in fancy needlework, these are the ends and objects of some persons. Girls so reared are mere butterflies in prosperity, while adversity crushes them entirely. In cultivating accomplishments in the way young ladies are accustomed to do, there is no mental discipline or hard toil; and when trouble and anxiety come, as come they surely do in all lives, there is neither strength for the encounter, fortitude to bear, or intelligence to strike out a new path. Under such a training the intellect withers, absolutely withers; every subject is approached with frivolity and viewed on the surface only; and the most superficial criticisms are passed on men and women of the noblest aims and finest talents, if they fall short of the poor standard acknowledged by these shallow minds. I have endeavoured to show that the merely useful woman often proved a comfortless companion by the fire-side, but she is preferable to the frivolous one. The latter cannot manage her house or govern her children; she is treated as a child by her relations, because she is not fit for any thing better; she cannot share the reflections of sensible people; her servants rule over her, and her children are openly rebellious; she may be spoiled and petted while young and pretty, but she will never feel herself an equal with father, husband, or brother; they may lavish gifts upon her and call her endearing names, but when care and thought sit on their brow, they will not seek her sympathy nor ask her counsel. Now, I consider confidence a higher compliment than presents or attentions. We make presents or pay attentions out of policy to indifferent persons, but our confidence is sacred to those whom we trust.

We have now only to consider that system which advocates the culture of the intellect to the neglect of the accomplishments. This course is pursued sometimes by fathers when left in charge of their daughters' education, through domestic bereavement. Annoyed at the want of cultivation and the frivolity of many of their lady friends, they resolve on a different result for their children, and certainly achieve it, though; perhaps, there is not much choice between them. I rather think no mistake in a girl's education has elicited more ridicule and condemnation than this; it is possible there may be a little jealousy in the matter. However, we know that in ordinary society a young lady, if pretty and

lively, will receive admiration of some sort, even if she is severely criticised for her other deficiencies. But a young lady who can see the beautiful only in art and literature, and neglects it in her dress and her house ; who can solve a mathematical problem easier than direct her cook's operations, and uses her needle more awkwardly than her pen, may make up her mind to be unappreciated and unpopular. I can fancy nothing more desolate than a home presided over by an unwomanly woman, nor anything more grating to a refined taste than contending for the mastery with man. Unless a woman is prepared to renounce every graceful feminine attribute, she assumes to be greatly man's superior, when she asserts herself capable of doing all he can do in the field of learning. Can she so entirely shake off the duties and renounce the pleasures of her position as mother, daughter, &c., as to place herself in an equally advantageous position as he ? Possibly if she had the same rearing from the cradle she might compete successfully, though what benefit would be derived from such a course I am at a loss to know. Rivalry, then, where victory is denied, appears foolish and impolitic, and although a fine intellect adorns a woman in the eyes of all noble minded men, still it must not be cultivated to the prejudice of those graceful tastes and useful acquirements without which a lady loses her fascinations, and forfeits her natural and proper place in the social circle.

I think it will be agreed that a training, producing either of these types, would, to an enlightened and liberal mind, be inefficient and one sided. Yet we have here all the elements of a good education. The useful, the beautiful, and the intellectual. The error is in separating them ; to render them valuable they must be combined, but what a task is this ? A young man is only expected to study those things that will advance his future prospects ; if he is destined to be a farmer, he is not obliged to learn Greek and Theology, any more than a candidate for the professions is required to understand agriculture and commerce. When his work is over in the field or the office, he is not supposed to go home and assume the housekeeping department ; nor is it detrimental to his reputation if he does not shine in the drawing room, and neither dances nor sings ; of course these accomplishments would make him more popular, but not alter his social standing, or lessen his domestic importance. But if a woman is only useful, or ornamental, or intellectual, she must fail in playing a successful part in the drama of life ; she is expected to live three existences ; she must excel in household management, adorn the social circle and be capable of discussing the affairs of the nation, the tendencies of a new book, or listen intelligently to a political controversy, or a treatise on the midge. She must make an apt remark at the right place, or her companion will think her stupid, while at the same time she is manipulating a difficult piece of sewing, or perhaps speculating on the result of a new method of cooking oysters. This is a homely illustration of what is expected of a well bred and well educated lady, and yet this is the gigantic undertaking. No wonder then there are so many failures, no wonder that the becomingly dressed graceful girl often annoys and disappoints us with her silliness ; the sensible well-read woman disgusts us with her ill arranged household and neglected children, and the model house-keeper

drives us away from her hearth by her sharp temper and twaddle about servants and management. Pause, ye who sit in condemnation, it is no trifle to do more than one thing well; is not society unjust in demanding so much from a young girl, and making so few provisions for educating her? Parliaments and Municipalities legislate for the education of boys; public opinion controls its application, and the subject is thought worthy of discussion by all; but what hearty universal attempt is made to bring the female mind up to the same standard? Will there be any real equality between them when they have reached maturity? Beauty and sprightliness will always have power to captivate, but will the charm last when sickness or age has dimmed the beauty, and sorrow or care has quenched the vivacity? Then, oh! then will woman need the resources of a well cultivated and well stored mind to fall back upon for her own comfort, to cheer and support her husband, to guide and train her children.

Before we consider what education should be to form the "perfect lady," let me suggest a few ideas on the true meaning of the much abused word. I regard it as one of comprehensive signification; deficiency in one department is as detrimental to a claimant for the title as exclusive excellence in another. Should we see a person ignorant of the common usages of polite society, we should condemn her at once as unladylike, and justly; but would the individual who could pay and receive visits without any breaches of good manners be more entitled to the name if she occasionally tripped in her grammar and was incapable of making a single intellectual remark on the topics or questions of the day? The old proverb says, "Manners make the man," and the present age seems inclined to apply this in its most restricted sense to woman; yet, logically, the assertion will not stand. There are ladies and gentlemen, who are deficient in elegance, and there are men and women of great polish, who cannot justly claim the epithet. For instance, an anecdote went the round of the papers of a noble Lord who was frequently taken for a waiter, on account of his clownish manners and plebeian appearance. A certain King of the House of Brunswick was particularly homely and plain in his style of behavior, and picked his bones at dinner, holding them in his fingers. One of the Dukes of Somerset was so awkward he did not know what to do with his hands, and generally kept them in his pockets; these persons were gentlemen by birth we must acknowledge, if not by breeding. Many ladies of the highest rank are ungraceful and plain, and we have seen *parvenus* assume with regal ease their new honors. The Empress Josephine was more queenly than born queens, and if rumor is to be believed Eugenie bears herself more majestically than Victoria, although *her* royal blood is inherited from Egbert, the progenitor of the Great Alfred. Aptitude to acquire polished easy manners is a natural gift, and arises from a combination of faculties, without which success is unattainable. But the highest surface polish, the strictest adherence to rules, the best models for imitation, will fail to produce the perfect Lady if the foundation is not laid in the heart. George 4th was the most polished gentleman in Europe, does that commendation spare him the scorn of history? Beau Brummell was a model of elegance, but that did not save him from the contempt of the good and great.

The term "Lady" is often arbitrarily applied, and means nothing more than simply how to conduct oneself according to certain rules differing in certain societies. We all remember the anecdote of the English gentleman being considered ill bred and low born, because among some African royalties he did not smack his lips when eating, which was their test of good manners. To be a Lady, then, implies something more than the attainment of certain manners; there must be a higher standard than that of ordinary society; there must be the standard of the highly cultivated and the highly moral, as well as of the highly polished; and when education aims at meeting these requirements, and not till then, it has the right goal in view.

We are now somewhat prepared to answer the enquiry—What is expected from a young girl to render her a Lady, in the most comprehensive and proper sense of the term?

First, then, a fair acquaintance with the various departments and branches of knowledge, as combined in a thorough course of study.

Second,—Respectable attainments in the several accomplishments, or at least excellence in some.

Third,—An intimate knowledge of the requirements and usages of good society, and such refinement of manners as can be acquired only by mixing freely in it.

Fourth,—Such a knowledge of the practical duties of life as will enable her, when arrived at a proper age, to undertake with confidence and discharge with success the responsibilities of the household and the family.

The two first qualifications are particularly the work of teachers and schools; the foundation of the third must be laid at the same time, but differs from the others, inasmuch as home co-operation is *indispensable*. Gentleness and refinement must prevail in the domestic circle, or school discipline and example are quickly forgotten. This department must be perfected, and the fourth entered upon, when the time comes for the usual routine of study to be dispensed with.

By the first qualification, I mean so much familiarity with History and Geography, Ancient and Modern, that she will readily understand most historical allusions, and the connexion of the present age in its politics and philosophy with the past, and I would have her acquire such a method of studying these subjects as would make it easy at any time to take up a particular history of a particular period or country, and master it with the least waste of time. Also such a knowledge of her own language that her correspondence may be correct and elegant; her diary, memorandum book, and album mirrors that reveal an educated mind. I would have her Arithmetic comprehensive, that in business transactions she could control results, and not feel herself at the mercy of the shopkeeper and the workman, as is often the case. I would add to these at-

tainments, an acquaintance with the Sciences and Literature, that she may not look with an ignorant eye on the wonders of that world of which she forms a part, and when thrown among the learned and scientific she may follow the conversation with pleasure, even when forbidden to assist.

By the second :—A good knowledge of the Theory and Practice of Music, and such cultivation of the voice as the individual talent will permit. My own taste would lead me to desire no other accomplishment, if the musical talent were really superior, and very highly cultivated ; should it, however, be only moderate, it would be as well to add Drawing or Painting, or both ; and if musical taste were altogether wanting, I would prefer that a pupil devote herself altogether to Drawing, as the time spent over the Piano will be only wasted. The Modern Languages should never be neglected in a thorough course of education. French has a particular claim on us as Canadians, with half of our fellow-subjects speaking that tongue, and Italian and German might be added advantageously, especially if the young pupil showed no preference for art.

Dancing, and various kinds of Needle Work, are easily attainable by all, and should rather be looked upon as amusements, than matters requiring serious application.

The foundation of the third department of education should begin from the cradle, and depends more strictly on moral training than anything else. A perfect control of temper, a consideration for the feelings of others, respect for age and virtue, a modest estimate of self—these are the attributes of the true lady, and must be taught from infancy. The usages of the polite world—an easy and graceful demeanor—are readily gained by intercourse with good society, when the basis is constructed on Christian principles and Christian love. Without this, polish is a spurious coinage, detected from the genuine ore at a glance by those whose admiration and praise are an honor.

The fourth branch is altogether the mother's department, and should be entered upon as soon as the school routine is completed. Among the wealthy aristocracy of the European world, this branch of education might be dispensed with, without ill effect ; but in this favored country, where few are so rich as not to be the happier and the better for excellence in domestic management, it should form an important part of a girl's training. Should the blind goddess lavish her favors on her, then will her efficiency in housekeeping add a charm to her *menage*, that wealth merely could not give ; and money that would be ignorantly spent, without benefit to any one, would, under her administration, supply food for the hungry and clothes to the naked. If, on the contrary, comparative poverty should be her lot, what a jewel in her matron's crown would be economy ! We need no magnifying glass to see the evils around us of bad management and extravagant housekeeping ; families that might be respected are brought to beggary through it, and men that ought to enjoy competency and freedom from care are bowed down with the

burden of supporting ill-ordered and spendthrift households. Mothers sometimes retain too tenaciously the reins of domestic government ; if they would devolve some of their duties on their grown-up daughters, it would prove beneficial to both. A few errors must be overlooked at first ; a few failures in marketing, a foolish investment now and then in shopping, must be expected, and cheerfully endured ; but a little practice soon enables the tyro to choose and purchase with almost the success of her elders, while her mother has the happy consciousness that when the time comes for them to part, it is not as an inexperienced child she sends her away to learn her lesson in bitterness and alone, but hopeful and confident of the future.

It now remains for us to enquire what are the best means within our reach of providing this education for our daughters. Many persons, who estimate education highly, entertain a deep-rooted distrust, if not an aversion to schools. Much could be said on both sides of the question ; and arguments in favour of home training, or school discipline, can be furnished in abundance by the advocates for either system : theoretically, I think, perhaps the admirers of home education have the best of it ; but I believe the discipline of schools to have been crowned with the most practical success.

It is a beautiful picture that of a young girl reared in the pure atmosphere of the domestic circle, accustomed to live in the sunshine of parental love ; to hear nothing but the refined conversation of her mother's select society, no reproof severer than *her* gentle admonitions, no word or sentiment but approved by her anxious censorship. With an amiable disposition, fair talents, and intellectual and refined parents, one can imagine a young girl bred up to womanhood in artless ignorance of all that is wicked and deceitful in the world, a charming study for those who are versed in its wiles, a creature to love and cherish, to watch and guide. This were well if such care were sure to be hers always ; if her duty in life were simply to follow somebody's lead ; to listen and obey : but since the most highly favored in circumstances cannot secure a future made to order for the most precious of children, surely the object of education should be, not merely to produce a type of character that is fascinating and loveable, but also to supply a knowledge of life as it is, and of human nature as we find it ; that will not leave honest principles and religious teachings at the mercy of the first assaults of temptation. Many and fatal are the errors committed through ignorance ; quite as fatal, and quite as many as those committed wilfully. The maiden that has never had an opportunity of comparing her mental and moral qualifications with those of others, is sure to enter life with false views, is likely to mistake specious vice for genuine virtue, and could never detect the gloss of superficial elegance from real worth. It might be asked, "How is this experience to be gained at school?" I would answer, that wisdom consists very much in forming a proper estimate of self, considered both absolutely and relatively, and in the power of applying that knowledge with discrimination to the various positions in which we may be placed ; and that a school, from its very constitution, its numbers, and mixed character, affords a better opportunity for attaining the

necessary information than the retirement of home. She can there compare her mental powers and standing with others of her age ; she discovers her moral shortcomings ; she cannot help finding out that she is peevish or passionate, and that the respect and love of her schoolfellows depend on overcoming her failings. In spite of the foolishness of youth, she will see that the popular and best liked are the truthful and independent ; and if a high moral tone pervades the establishment, there will be the pressure of public opinion on a small scale, which will work very beneficially on the character of the children. There is an atmosphere of impartiality about a school that is almost unattainable at home, which is admirably adapted to dissipate any false impression of superiority : the young pupil will not be blinded to her deficiencies because mamma and papa tenderly appreciate her lukewarm efforts ; she knows well enough *that* will not advance her in her class, or help her to excel her schoolfellows ; and her happy confidence in the criticism of indulgent parents gives way to a consciousness that actual merit is the only test, and industry and perseverance the only paths to eminence. There is no doubt that submission and discipline might be taught at home, as well as at school ; but are they, generally ? It is good for a child to be so many hours of a day under control ; she learns to govern her temper, and be forbearing ; she has not the same inducements to idleness and disobedience, for all are busy and all obey ; and youth cannot help moulding itself on the model offered for imitation. Now, this training is not to be arrived at in private tuition. The child has no opportunity of comparing herself with her superiors : she has no gauge by which to estimate her powers, and will grow up conceited and overbearing, or run into the opposite extreme of excessive diffidence, according to the peculiar disposition : but either fault would be obviated by intercourse with others, the shy and modest learn to value themselves more correctly, while the self-sufficient have their proud front lowered. Few parents are firm enough to adhere to their own rules : it is hard to withstand the pleadings of a pet child, even when the request is to its own injury ; and domestic duties, sickness, visitors, in fact the most ordinary events of life, are so many obstacles to regularity. A child reared altogether under the paternal roof is somewhat similarly situated to a young Prince, in danger of never hearing the truth ; it is the interest of those surrounding her to keep her self-satisfied ; she is quite aware that her relations have a high opinion of her capacity and progress, she feels that she is an object of anxiety to her family : her efforts are magnified, her talents praised, and every step appreciated. The result of such a course must be disappointment.

So much in favor of schools. But school teaching often proves a miserable failure. Granted that the system of study is admirable, what is the cause of this failure ? One of the most obvious reasons is the late age at which children are sent to school. They form low tastes, for dress and exciting amusements for instance ; and not unfrequently, except in well regulated families, become disobedient as a rule, unless obedience is pleasing. After a while, at ten, twelve, thirteen, or even later, as the case may be, one parent, perhaps both, become aware that their little girl, who is the object of their tenderest affection, is growing up unmanageable and ignorant, and she is sent to school without one hour's preparatory discipline. Dislike for study is the consequence, and before the pupil's mind has had a chance of development, her

age leads her into society more or less, and all hope of efficiently doing the work is over. This custom of permitting children to share the amusements of their elders, which is growing upon us daily no doubt from our proximity to the Americans, where girls have their beaux and boys their cigars when they should be in pinafores playing with dolls and kites, is obnoxious both to health and education. The aim of many young people, and of their parents for them, is to shine in society; and if they find they can attain their end, without further trouble and toil, why should they study? Various extraneous circumstances may give them temporary success in the social sphere—the position of their parents, their personal charms, the fascination of youth—and they naturally conclude they ought to be satisfied with themselves, since the world seems to smile so approvingly on them. Now, I would like to put it to any young lady of sense whether it is complimentary to receive attentions merely for the sake of her parents, or for mere beauty of face? The clown can see and admire beauty. Would she care for such admiration? The maid servant, the peasant, the gipsy girl may possess prettiness in common with her. Does she not desire something better,—some real, intellectual possessions, attained by her own effort, to attract admiration and inspire regard? Thus, this early introduction into society deprives the young girl of a powerful incentive to study. How can any one be expected to pursue geography, history, and French with zeal, when the mind is occupied with the pleasures of the previous evening's entertainment, or the prospect of a future one? How absurd will the reproofs of her teachers sound in her ear, when she has been told that she needs nothing to render her perfect: how contradictory the efforts of her masters to urge her to exertion, when the honeyed tones of flattery have already whispered to her that her power to please is limited only by her wish. If young people must emerge into the fashionable world so soon, then they should begin their studies soon, so that one may be dropped when the other is taken up: to try and carry on both is unjust to parents, pupils, teachers, and all concerned.

Infant prodigies of learning are painful to the spectator and dangerous to the individual; and to ensure a happy result in education, there is not the slightest occasion to begin in infancy; but it must not be forgotten that precocity more frequently shows itself in shrewd sayings and witty remarks than in any wonderful aptitude for study. The first seven years of life might advantageously be employed in laying a foundation of good health and good temper. Early hours, plenty of exercise, abundance of fresh air and water, with wholesome food, will effect the former in ordinary cases, while a cheerful domestic circle and parental sympathy will ensure the latter. The little one should be taught implicit and ready obedience: truth and gentleness may be instilled more by example than precept. If in addition to this the loving mother can teach her child to read, so much the better: no one can impart the first lessons like a mother: it is a sacred task, and should not be set aside except by imperative duties. However, a healthy, truthful, obedient child of seven is a most hopeful pupil, even if it does not know A from B. Regular attendance and average talent will enable such a pupil, under careful and judicious teachers, to leave school when some neglected girls are just discovering the necessity of beginning. Accomplishments well grounded during the period of school attendance, can then be perfected under the paternal roof, by the assistance of masters; and now is the time to complete the third department of education, and commence the fourth.

When we remember at how early an age many young women of the highest rank in Canadian society begin the serious duties of life, and that at twelve or thirteen they were ignorant of even the rudimentary branches of learning, should we be surprised at any want of culture or lack of information in young people so reared, or rebel at the contempt in which men in general hold the

feminine mind, as it too often presents itself, after the usual fashionable routine of education has been completed.

Another cause of failure is the want of interest shown by parents in the education of their children. Many think they have done their duty when a teacher or school is selected, and the bills paid. Not so. A child is the reflex of its parents ; what is prized by them must be valuable, not otherwise. If no anxiety is felt at home about its progress, there will be comparatively little shown by the child ; the parental standard of education will be its standard. If cultivation of the higher faculties be esteemed lightly by the parent, then the teacher may look in vain for any energy and earnestness on the part of the pupil to surmount the difficulties in the way of her intellectual progress. People are so indifferent sometimes to the importance of education, that they will employ inefficient teachers, because they sympathise with their circumstances ; or perhaps the individual in question may be a relative, and must be supported. Unfortunately, there is no profession where so much imposition may be practised ; and teaching is often taken up as a last resource by persons incapable of doing anything else. Better sacrifice any thing, rather than a child's education : no influence nor motive should sway the choice of a teacher, but a desire for its good ; and if charity must be done, let it be done disinterestedly, or at least without inflicting injury on our children. Masters are not permitted to assume the tutorship of boys without some proof of their fitness—perhaps College honors, or a Normal School certificate. Grammar Schools and Common Schools are taught by teachers tested by carefully selected judges ; but in girls' education any destitute lady-like woman, or orphan daughter of respectability, assumes to be competent to the task, and entire fitness is never called in question, or success made the test. I mean by success, success in developing the faculties of the pupil, and producing something worthy of the name of *education* ; not, certainly, *success* in securing large attendance of pupils, the only test which too many persons ever think of applying. The qualifications already enumerated as indispensable in forming the lady, indicate, so far as they go, the qualifications essential to the teacher. If scholarship were the test alone, then the important elements of elegance and feminine accomplishments might be neglected, while one who excelled only in the latter would be in danger of overrating their importance in the eyes of the pupils. A mind equally balanced, appreciating each development justly, and keeping in view the perfect whole, is the most desirable for such a position. In any special department the services of competent masters can be had ; but as every one is liable to value too highly his peculiar art or science, it is the especial duty of the Principal to estimate correctly the relative importance of each branch, and impress such estimate on the pupil's mind. Some kind of provision might be made, possibly, for determining the fitness of lady teachers. The public provision that already exists comprehends only a course of study in certain English branches, which, alone, will never recommend itself to the polished circles of aristocratic society ; hence the demand for private schools, to meet the main requirements of that class, viz., the accomplishments, and a certain polish of manners : if more of the intellectual could be added, it would surely be an improvement, and I believe would be welcomed.

A thorough understanding and co-operation between parents and teachers is absolutely necessary for success. Young people naturally dislike hard work, and yet there is no reward in the field of learning without toil. There *must* be times when the daily exaction of study is irksome, and the duties of school are antagonistic to the inclinations. In such cases the teacher has two alternatives, to let the fault pass unnoticed if the conscience will permit, and which in many cases will please parents as well as children, or to show displeasure by censure or punishment, as the fault may require. The latter course appears the only one open to common sense and common honesty, and yet it is perilous to the

interest of the teacher. The sympathies of parents are aroused instantly by the complaint of a child, and although it is often acknowledged that home teaching did not answer, with the unlimited authority of a father and mother to bear upon it, yet the only power frequently delegated to a stranger to achieve the difficult work, is permission to bring on the pupil rapidly, without one disagreeable or unwilling effort on her part. I have heard mothers own that their daughters have been at school from childhood, and yet are not half educated, and wonder over the cause, seeking remote reasons in the idiosyncrasies of their children's dispositions, certain mental characteristics, their high spirit or volatility: no doubt there are favorable and unfavorable combinations in the faculties of different children, but the one great abyss that separates the ill educated from the highly cultivated, where the advantages have been similar, is want of submission to proper authority. I do not mean mere physical obedience; there are few children that would refuse that; but submission of the heart and will, a *desire* to meet the teacher's requirements. This is one of the lessons that must be taught by parents or left untaught. A teacher can often gain the same end by working on other feelings or exciting other emotions, such as shame and emulation, but the labor is tedious, much precious time is lost, and the moral effect often injurious. It has been well said, that "the first and most important lesson in life is submission." A child's submission to its parents, and to those entrusted by its parents with its control, should be entire. To teach this submission is not a matter of taste, or choice; it is a holy and imperative duty. The anger of God follows the undutiful child. Oh! what a cruel inheritance for a parent to bequeath.

It would be well that no one, under any circumstances, should be employed in the capacity of teacher who is not entirely deserving of confidence; that the most careful inquiry should be made into qualification and character; and all human foresight used to insure a wise selection. But the choice once made, perfect control should be given over the pupil, until good and sufficient reason was offered for the contrary, and when such reason did occur an immediate change should be made, and not a languid fault finding, frequently carried on in the presence of the pupil, and her opinion and criticism taken into consideration, with attendance continued, of course utterly without any beneficial result. Let parents be plain spoken to teachers, and be quite sure that they never condemn them for doing their duty faithfully. The most indulgent mother would be dissatisfied if, after months of supposed study, her darling showed no improvement, and yet she may have been ready to censure any course to ensure that improvement, which proved unpalatable to the pupil. None know, but those who have tried it, the time that is lost in alluring and coaxing a reluctant or self-willed child over a mental difficulty, that might be conquered at one sitting, if prompt submission were a habit, and she knew home discipline would support school training. This is one reason of the necessity for long school hours. If pupils wasted no time in smothered rebellion, indolence, and idle conversation, their work would be achieved successfully in half the space that is usually allotted for it. But if, with the ordinary five or six hours in school, we count the allowance for the practice of music, and for preparatory study, the period taken up in undutiful parleying, in unwilling obedience to the letter and utter disobedience to the spirit of the parental commands, we have a day of discontent, unhappiness, and sin, the sight of which would make the angels weep, as portraying the life of those who should be Christ's little ones, the lambs of His fold, the sheep of His flock.

This is not the place to enter upon the technicalities of intellectual training; my design is to present a broad and general view of the subject; particular views and systems of teaching are only interesting to the profession. I will merely remark, however, that I think memory should never be cultivated at the expense of the judgment, and no forward step should be taken until the present position is perfectly mastered. It is not enough to be able to do or say a thing, it must be understood and applied. It is too much the fashion to press on to the higher branches of study, while the preliminary ones are neglected—another consequence of beginning to learn late, for grown girls do not like to be toiling at work that should have been accomplished years previously; and thus, we often hear of young ladies pursuing Algebra and Latin who cannot write a dozen pages of good English, or read with correct pronunciation and proper emphasis. I am of Lord Littleton's opinion, who, in a speech delivered as President of a Mechanics' Institute, regretted that the old fashioned accomplishments of fine reading and correct orthography were falling into disrepute among their more high sounding and brilliant rivals. I do not mean by this that children should be restricted to rudimentary studies, but that the chief part of their time should be given to a thorough grounding in fundamental principles, until mastered. One great difficulty of a teacher is to secure the hearty

co-operation of young pupils, even when well trained and disposed to learn. Perhaps no means of doing so is more successful than opening out to them, from time to time, glimpses of that world of knowledge which will be theirs, if they persevere to the end. Children *will* weary occasionally over the drudgery of rudimentary learning; they do not see the aim of many of their studies, and even when explained to them, such aims are frequently beyond their present ambition. Dr. Brown says, a child's world is only three feet high, meaning that the objects that interest children are near ones. History, Grammar, and Geography, unless taught by those who have thoroughly explored the secret avenues to the young mind, are lessons merely to be cast off and forgotten, when the school hours are over; there is no connection with them and anything in their existence; life would be quite as enjoyable without them; they need to recognize a connecting link between their studies and every day experience; they want the apparent antagonism of school studies and life's interests to be reconciled. Children's perceptions are keen. It is generally the child of the house that discovers the first ripe apple or cherry of the season, the first violet or rose in the flower garden, the new bird's nest in the tree. Wandering through wood and vale, by mountain stream or ocean shore, they will examine with lively curiosity every little flowering weed or buzzing insect; they will collect a precious store of stones and shells, dead butterflies and bird's eggs. Now, a half hour spent occasionally upon these subjects reveals to them the relation that science bears to the trifles that amuse and please them: they learn with delight that their little treasures are not despicable, and only fit for children, but sources of contemplation or curiosity to the greatest intellects. This love of the natural world, and inquisitiveness after the causes of phenomena, often die out early in the young mind, and I believe from want of sympathy and cultivation. It seems to me, that comparatively fresh as the young are from the Creator's hand, they enjoy the study of *His* works more than the arts invented by man, or the histories of his varied and eventful career. If the chief end of education is to foster a love of knowledge, surely the time is not lost that awakens ambition of discovery and acquisition in her ample field, and that unites the school and the teacher with the World of Nature. Girls particularly require the cultivation of this taste, for since the greater part of their lives is spent within doors, narrow aims and petty cares absorb the energies and dwarf the brain. I am not looking to the actual information gained, but to the enlarging and liberalizing influence of a general view of great subjects. I would rather a child, in gazing into the starry sky, was penetrated with awe at the stupendous vastness of the Creator's works, than to be able to name each particular star. The latter might be acquired by industry, without any comprehension of the magnificent scheme of Deity, of worlds beyond worlds, systems beyond systems, until finite minds sink appalled at the contemplation. One acquirement might have the effect of exciting self-conceit; the other could not fail to inspire humility. Thus intellectual cultivation may progress hand in hand with moral and religious advancement; and the effect on the character is scarcely less perceptible than the effect on the mind.

Before closing, I must reiterate my deep sense of incompetency to do justice even to my own limited conception of the magnitude and importance of the subject. I have broken the ice: I leave the plunge to bolder swimmers. But as the widow's mite was accepted by the Lord of all, so I trust my small offering towards attracting attention to the deficiencies of girls' education may be received indulgently by parents and friends.

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